



A photo of the module teachers and a running segment of each workshop.

Integration of SDGs in

- Institutional governance/strategic level
- SDGs in research
- SDGs in campus operations
- SDGs in curriculum development
- SDGs in student engagement activities
- SDGs into community activities
- SDGs at a whole-institution level

Focus on

- Goal 1 - No poverty
- Goal 2 - Zero hunger
- Goal 3 - Good health and wellbeing
- Goal 4 - Quality education
- Goal 5 - Gender equality
- Goal 6 - Clean water and sanitation
- Goal 7 - Affordable and clean energy
- Goal 8 - Decent work and economic growth
- Goal 9 - Industry, innovation and infrastructure
- Goal 10 - Reduced inequalities
- Goal 11 - Sustainable cities and communities
- Goal 12 - Responsible consumption and production

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- Goal 13 - Climate action
- Goal 14 - Life below water
- Goal 15 - Life on land
- Goal 16 - Peace, justice and strong institutions
- Goal 17 - Partnerships for the goals

Summary

The University of Leicester is committed to embedding the SDGs through Education for sustainable development (ESD) as a vision for our Research-inspired Education to give students the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values to become socially responsible global citizens. Our latest innovation to develop student sustainability skills is a 3rd year optional work-related learning module called 'Sustainability enterprise partnership project (SEPP)' that sees students in multi-disciplinary teams partnering with local businesses to conduct sustainability audits. Student outcomes from this module have been excellent, including all students gaining external Carbon Literacy Accreditation, and student feedback has been extremely positive.

When asked, 'Do you think working with a real businesses added value to the module?' all students said yes. A quote is also included below:

Yes because it makes you think about how to apply each thing you've learnt and researched to the business. It also makes you think about how to write in a more professional manner. Especially if you haven't done anything business related before, it gives you an opportunity to see what it is like and consider a different area you might have never considered about exploring before.

In the 2022 NUS skills survey, 87% of our students agreed that sustainable development should be activity incorporated and promoted at the University of Leicester, 77% of students thought that this should be done through courses and 85% wanted this to be addressed through work experience. As a response to this we have extended the number of programmes that offer the option of the SEPP module to students for the next academic year and are now offering it during both semester 1 and 2.

Outline the benefits of integrating this theme:

1. Enhancing student employability by embedding skill development and professional reflection as core aspects of the module and allowing students from science and technical backgrounds and degree courses to translate their experiences into transferable skills. Students also experience living labs education by working on real world business challenges with the local community.
2. By trailing the first interdisciplinary module at the university, we have created a pathway for others to offer modules and opportunities in a similar format. There are discussions about enterprise and innovation running a similar pathway for students in future.
3. Local businesses received bespoke sustainability support for their organisation set across 6 key themes with practical, data and research informed recommendations from the students on the module. Feedback from businesses suggests they found these reports useful and would take part in the module again.

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Outline the barriers or challenges encountered in integrating this theme and how you overcame these:

1. The sustainability audits were initially completed as part of wider university initiatives to support local businesses on their journey to Net Zero, however once funding for that project ended we no longer had regular audits being completed. Because of this we have had to find alternative ways of gathering data to use in future iterations of the module, but this does mean we now have the opportunity to explore ways that we could embed this as part of other university initiatives such as through student placements or with other university partnerships.
2. It is a challenge to effectively communicate the feedback from the module across the university to all interested stakeholders as the standardised module evaluation form is not very detailed. We ended up writing a module evaluation paper to detail the key learning points from the pilot.
3. Encouraging students to engage with skill development as part of the module led to a lot of enquiries and requests for more information about sustainability careers which our careers and employability service were not prepared for. Because of this we have now been able to secure funding for additional training for the careers team around green skills and sustainability employment challenges, this should ensure that students have appropriate next steps for sustainable skill development following future iterations of the module.


Conclusions and recommendations

We encourage all universities to consider interdisciplinary learning as a key driver for sustainability skill development. Students really saw the benefit from working in interdisciplinary groups and it produced well rounded written reports and insightful reflections about the process of group work and professional experiences. I have included a quote as part of this case study.

SDG 17 has been key to our approach to this project and we have found to be one of the most impactful ways of addressing sustainability. By working with the Universities Partnership group, we are able to address support the universities Environmental Partnership aims with our sustainability audit offer and are currently working with a partner university to consider how our students might work together to share data and enhance reporting for local businesses on their journey to reach Net Zero.

We are excited to see new and continued developments to this module with additional programmes set to offer this as an option each year.

A quote from a student reflection activity on the SEPP module

Although coming into the project I may have been intimidated by the idea of working as part of an interdisciplinary group, I quickly realised the benefits of it; members from different degree streams were able to contribute to different aspects of the report and collate ideas together that may not have been put forward otherwise. Having group members with differing experience meant we were able to cover a broader scope of intellect as everyone had strengths in certain areas. It was nice to interact with people who I may not necessarily have met if it had not been for this project and it gave a me a real idea of what a work life is life. I felt as the project progressed I became more confident and was able to express ideas to my group members more easily which altogether made producing the work as a group more comfortable. I have enjoyed working with a partner organisation in this way and I think it has opened my eyes into this sector of work and it is something I would very much like to pursue  a prospectus postgraduate student.